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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 HA-05 L-03 AF-10
ARA-10 EA-10 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 ABF-01 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8508
INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UNRWA, LE
SUBJECT: U.S. PLEDGE OF ADDITIONAL FY 1978 FUNDS TO UNRWA

REF: BEIRUT 3646

1. UNRWA COMMISSIONER GENERAL MCELHINEY CALLED DCM MORNING JUNE 30 (MCELHINEY'S DEPARTURE FROM BEIRUT WAS POSTPONED 48 HOURS) TO DISCUSS USG PLEDGE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS. HE SAID THAT DEPT HAD TOLD HIM IT WANTED UNRWA TO ISSUE PRESS RELEASE ON THIS SUBJECT AND HE PROPOSED FOLLOWING DRAFT: BEGIN TEXT.
"U.S. ACTION ASSURES EXTENSION OF UNRWA EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR PALESTINE REFUGEE YOUTH."

"IN CONSIDERATION OF A STATEMENT OF INTENT BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO PLEDGE AN ADDITIONAL $8.5 MILLION TO THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (UNRWA), MR. THOMAS W. MCELHINEY, UNRWA'S COMMISSIONER-GENERAL, ANNOUNCED TODAY IN BEIRUT THAT THE AGENCY'S PRE-PARATORY SCHOOL PROGRAMME FOR 90,000 PALESTINE REFUGEE BOYS AND GIRLS THROUGHOUT THE NEAR EAST
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WILL BE MAINTAINED AT LEAST THROUGH OCTOBER. THE ACTUAL CONTRIBUTION OF $8.5 MILLION IS SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND, IF THE CONGRESS APPROVES THE APPROPRIATION IT IS NOW CONSIDERING, THE PROGRAMME WILL BE EXTENDED TO THE END OF THE YEAR AND WILL THEN CONTINUE INTO 1979.

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"THE STATEMENT OF INTENT WAS CONTAINED IN A LETTER FROM UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR RICHARD B. PARKER. COMMISSIONER-GENERAL MCELHINEY COMMENTED THAT THE UNITED STATES ACTION, WHICH ALLOWS UNRWA TO RAISE ITS ESTIMATE OF INCOME FOR 1978, WAS "WELCOME AND TIMELY ASSISTANCE TO UNRWA FOR THE 1.7 MILLION PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE REGION, WHO HAVE ALWAYS PLACED THE HIGHEST PRIORITY ON EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

"BEFORE THE UNITED STATES STATED ITS INTENTION TO PLEDGE AN ADDITIONAL $8.5 MILLION,UNRWA'S PRE-PARATORY SCHOOL CYCLE IN LEBANON, EAST JORDAN, THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC AND THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP WAS IN DANGER OF BEING SUSPENDED AT THE END OF AUGUST, BECAUSE OF THE AGENCY'S MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR DEFICIT IN 1978.

"MORE THAN HALF OF UNRWA'S BUDGETED EXPENDITURES ARE FOR REFUGEE EDUCATION, INCLUDING THE OPERATION OF 610 SCHOOLS, EIGHT VOCATIONAL AND TEACHER TRAINING CENTRES AND SUBSIDIZED SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR 380,000 PALESTINE REFUGEE YOUTH. THE REMAINDER OF THE BUDGET GOES FOR HEALTH AND RELIEF PROGRAMMES.

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"EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PLEDGED A REGULAR CONTRIBUTION OF $42.5 MILLION TO UNRWA. THE TOTAL CONTRIBUTION FOR 1978 WILL THERE-FORE BE $51 MILLION." END TEXT

2. PLEASE ADVISE IF EMBASSY SHOULD INFORM UNRWA THAT USG WANTS THIS PRESS RELEASE ISSUED.

DECON 6/30/79
PARKER

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